

*Note on an Inscription found upon a stone lying near the ruins of a Masjid on Lanka Island, Wular Lake, Kashmir.*—By MAJOR H. S. JARRETT, B. S. C.\*

The inscription which is in Persian, is as follows:—

این بقعه چو بنیان فلک محکم باد  
مشهورترین زیب در عالم باد  
شاه زین عباد تادر و جشن کند  
پیدوسته چو تاریخ خودش خرم باد

May this edifice be as firm as the foundations of the heavens,  
May it be the most renowned ornament of the universe,  
As long as the monarch Zayn Ibád holds festival therein  
May it be like the date of his own reign,—“happy.”

As is well-known the letters of the Arabic alphabet, like those of the Hebrew or Phœnician and consequently of the Greek, are used as numerals, and the grouping of certain letters into a suitable word is frequently made to serve as a *memoria technica* among the Easterns to recall a date. In the above inscription, the numerical value of the letters in khurram (خرم happy) is 847 which is the year of the Hijra it is intended to record. This date is equivalent to A. D. 1443-4 during which Zayn-úl-Aábidín (the Zayn Ibád of the inscription—for both have the same meaning, *viz.*, ornament of the Adorers) ruled in Kashmir.

It may be interesting to glance cursorily over the events which preceded the accession of this prince from the period of the close of the last Hindu dynasty in the eleventh century of our era.

The Hindu history of that country has been discussed in a short Essay by Horace Hayman Wilson which will be found in the XVth Vol. of the Transactions of the Asiatic Society. He takes as his guide the first of the series of the Raja Tarangini, by Kalhan Pandit who commences his history with the fabulous ages and carries it down to the reign of Sangrama Deva the nephew of Didda Ráni in Sáka 949 or A. D. 1027 approaching to what Wilson considers to be the Pandit's own time Saka 1070 or A. D. 1148. The next two works of the series, *viz.*, the Rajavali of Jonah Raja and the Sri Jaina Rájá Tarangini of his pupil Sri Vara Pandit, continue the record to the accession of Fath Sháh, which Wilson places in A. H. 882, but is given by Muhammad Áqazam author of the Persian history of Kashmir, as in A. H. 897 (A. D. 1491-2).

\* [A rubbing of this inscription was sent to the Society by Mr. Arch. Constable. The stone bearing the inscription is apparently a slab of black slate, well polished and finished, and measures  $21\frac{1}{2}$  by 12 inches and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches thick. The rubbing was taken on the 22nd September, 1874. The inscription, as shown in the rubbing, contains several inaccuracies; thus in the 2nd line زیب is wrongly spelled ذیب; the 1st and 4th lines have جو instead of چو, two dots being omitted apparently for want of space. Ed.]

In the following survey I have followed the narrative of this last mentioned historian who calls himself the son of Khayr úz-Zamán and who commenced writing his history in the year 1147 A. H. (A. D. 1734-5) during the reign of Muhammad Sháh of Hindustán. His work follows the order of the Sanskrit and is divided into three periods, the first treating purely of the Hindu dynasties, the second of the Muhammadan, and the third of the subjugation of the country by the House of Timúr, with some concluding remarks on the features and curiosities of the country.

With the second period alone is this Note concerned, and the narrative is taken up at the accession of the last Hindu Rajah Sahdeo in A. H. 705 (A. D. 1305-6). During his reign occurred an irruption of the Turks under Zulju whose ravages left for generations the traces of his incursion. Forced to leave the country in the winter after a stay of eight months, the army, betrayed by guides, perished in the mountain snows. Many of the inhabitants of the country had fled in fear of their lives, some to Tibet, others, including Rajah Sahdeo, to Kishtwára where he remained in hopes of some day recovering his crown. His General Rám Chand who had been among the fugitives returned to Kashmir with a refugee from Tibet named Rihjú to whom in former times he had accorded his protection. The country was now in a state of anarchy, each petty chief asserting his own independence. Rám Chand and his people occupied the fortress of Lár. Rihjú\* or Rinjú (for the name is indistinctly written) seeing his opportunity gathered a few followers round him, made himself master by stratagem, of Lár, put Rám Chand to death and took his family prisoners. He now (A. H. 725 A. D. 1324) openly assumed the sovereignty, married the daughter of Rám Chand and won to his side the son of that Chief by granting him the government of Lár and Tibet and appointing him to a high command in the army. Though Buddhism was nominally the prevailing religion at this time, the country was distracted by the dissensions of sectaries, whose hostile and contending claims to religious truth perplexed the inquirer dissatisfied with the national religion. Such an inquirer was Rájá Rinjú, who after much perturbation of spirits and constant prayer, was led by divine inspiration—so runs the simple narrative—to watch a Moslem at his devotions. He saw, admired and believed, and soon led his court and people to embrace the Muhammadan faith. This monarch died in A. H. 727, after a reign of a little more than two years and a half, and the ruins of a once noble alms-house and a splendid mosque attest his reverence for the faith of his adoption. His widow Kotahrini† married Udayn Deo, brother of the last Rájá, who continued with his consort to carry on the government till the year A. H. 742, when he died. One of the Generals of the army coming

\* The Rájataranginí has the name Rinchan.

† In the Rájataranginí Kotah Rani.

of a royal stock, named Shahmír who, settling in Kashmír in the reign of Sahdeo as a merchant, had fast risen to place and power, now thought himself strong enough to marry the twice-widowed queen and to usurp the crown. She refused his overtures, but he made himself master of her person, and she was forced to yield a reluctant consent to the espousals. She, however, slew herself during the marriage festival and Shahmír now became undisputed master of the crown (A. H. 743 A. D. 1342-3) and assumed the title of Sultán Shams-u'd-dín. He died in 747 A. H. (A. D. 1346-7) leaving two sons, Jamshíd and Ali Sher.

The reign of Jamshíd was short. He was defeated and slain in battle by his brother who succeeded him in 748 under the title of Alá-u'd-dín.

Alá-ud-dín's rule of ten years is marked by no important event. He died in A. H. 748 (A. D. 1356-8) and was buried at Alá-u'd-dínpúra.

His son Shaháb-u'd-dín succeeded to the crown on the death of his father. He employed his energies in clearing the country of rebels and marauders, and annexed Pakli, Dantaur and the tract, called the Sawád Kabír, to the crown. He wrested Tibet from the ruler of Káshghar and ventured to march towards India, then ruled by Firúz Sháh. After a campaign in which the victory was with neither party, peace was concluded on these conditions that the country from Sirhind to Kashmír should appertain to Shaháb-'ud-dín, while all to the eastward should acknowledge the sovereignty of Firúz Sháh. Muhammad Ázam\* notes with surprise that this fact, which he says is mentioned by many historians, is left unnoticed by the author of the *Tárikh-i-Firuz Sháhi*. I may add that it is equally omitted by Elphinstone. (A. H. 758, A. D. 1356-7.)

On his return to Kashmír, he built the capital of Shaháb-u'd-dínpúra of which now not a trace but the ruins of a mosque remain, and he destroyed the large idol temple at Bijárah.† In the year A. H. 778 (A. D. 1376-7) he died.

Ḳuṭb-úd-dín his brother succeeded him in A. H. 780 (A. D. 1378-9). He ruled with justice and moderation and was celebrated as a scholar and a poet. Ḳuṭb-úd-dínpúra commemorated his name and the metropolis of his kingdom. He died in A. H. 796 after a reign of sixteen years. During his time occurred the advent to the court of Sayyid Ali Hamadání, the sixteenth in direct descent from Ali-b-Abi-Tálib, the son-in-law of Muhammad. He was revered for his sanctity and eminent virtues, and his influence guided the counsels of the monarch. The Sayyid bestowed on him his own cap which Ḳuṭb-úd-dín wore in the royal crown. It is feigned that

\* His son Muhammad Aslan, who is the author of the History of Kashmír entitled the *Gohar-i Aalam* and has made considerable additions to his father's work, goes so far as to say that the conquests of Shahab-úd-dín were carried northwards beyond the Oxus and southwards beyond Lahore.

† Called also Bihárah or Bij Bihárah.

its efficacy secured the throne to the monarch's successors until the reign of Fath Sháh who directed it to be buried with him, from which period dates the decline of the dynasty.

His son Sultán Sikandar, better known by the title of the Iconoclast from the number of idols he destroyed, assumed the sovereignty in A. H. 796 (A. D. 1393-4). During his reign, the rapid advance of Timúr on his march to India, induced Sikandar to conciliate the Tartar conqueror by despatching his son Sháhi Khán known afterwards as Zayn-u'l Aábidín to his court with presents and friendly letters. Timúr gratified by this conduct, left him in possession of his territory but detained Sháhi Khán in Samarkand which he never left until Timúr's death. Sikandar after a reign of twenty-five years and nine months, died in A. H. 822. A superb mosque which contained 372 columns, each 40 cubits in height and 6 in circumference, was begun and completed by him in the space of three years under the direction of two famous architects Khwajah Sudr-úd-dín Khorasáni, and Sayyid Muḥammad Nuristáni. To his piety was also owing the erection of the great mosque of Bijárah, and with the exception of the rattle of the royal kettle-drums, no profane music was permitted to disturb the austere tranquillity of his capital. Through his munificence the walls of the romantic gardens of Shalimar were extended as far as the Parganah of Phág and their stability was assured or blessed by the burial beneath their foundations of all the Hindu works that could be collected. As these treated either of idolatrous rites, astrology or history that was fabulous, they were considered by the monarch as condign objects for destruction.

He was succeeded by his son Ali who reigned but six years and nine months. This prince bent upon performing the pilgrimage to Mecca resigned his kingdom in A. H. 828 into the hands of his famous brother Zayn úl Aábidín and set out on his journey. A. H. 822. (A. D. 1419).

A. H. 828. (A. D. 1424-5.) Zayn úl Aábidín was noted early in life for his abilities. He employed the time he had spent in Samarkand in adding to his store of knowledge, and on his return to his country he brought with him a number of artificers, such as paper-makers, book-binders, carpet-weavers, saddlers and others to improve the industries of his own land. His brother Ali having reached the territory of his father-in-law the Jammu Chief, was persuaded by him to abandon his pilgrimage and resume his sovereignty. Returning therefore with an army, he was met by his brother Zayn úl Aábidín, who gave him battle, defeated him and placed him in confinement wherein he shortly after died. The powerful faction of the Gurjis who in the time of his father possessed great influence in state affairs, and who favoured the cause of his brother, was exterminated by him at Naushahr, at which palace he erected a place for his own residence.

His time was now spent in promoting the prosperity of his country

and in repairing the ravages of the irruption of the Turks under Zulju which the lapse of more than a century had not yet been able to efface. He was a liberal patron of men of letters and encouraged the progress of the arts, especially favouring the artificers whom he had introduced from Samarkand. He travelled much over his dominions and his Hindu and Muhammadan subjects lived at peace with each other undisturbed by religious dissensions, which if they arose were amicably settled by panchayets at which the monarch himself would preside. This conduct gained for him the title of the Great King.

According to tradition in the vicinity of the Wular lake once stood a city of which the Rájá was Sudrasen. By reason of the enormity of his crimes, the waters of the lake rose and drowned him and his subjects. It was said that during the winter months, at low water, the ruins of a submerged idol temple might be seen rising from the lake. Zayn úl Aábidín constructed a spacious barge which he sank in the lake and upon which he laid a foundation of bricks and stones till it rose high enough to be level with the water. Upon this he erected a mosque and other buildings and gave the islet the name of Lanka. The expense of the work was defrayed by the fortunate discovery of two idols of solid gold which had been brought up from the lake by divers. On the completion of Lanka the king ordered a great festival to be held wherein great sums were distributed amongst the poor. Verses were written by the poets to commemorate this event, and among these the inscription under notice by Ahmad Allámah Kashmíri was engraved upon a stone and placed above the Mihráb or sanctuary of the mosque. This Ahmad Kashmíri was the author of the Núr-náma, a Persian translation made in the time of Zayn úl Aábidín of an ancient History of Kashmir in the Kashmirian language by Shaikh Nur-úd-dín Wali. His translation was made use of by Muhammad Aslam the son of Muhammad Aázam, in amending the omissions of his father's History. Mention of the slab with its inscription is made by Muhammad Aázam who gives a faithful transcript of the verses Muhammad Aslam states that he visited Lanka in 1167 A. H. (A. D. 1753) and observing the inscription carried it in his memory and records it in his work. His second line runs thus—

مشهور به زیب و زین در عالم باد

which shows that either his memory failed him or he was unable to decipher the line more correctly given by his father.

The further history of Zayn úl Aábidín it is perhaps unnecessary to record. He died in A. H. 880 (A. D. 1475) and was succeeded by his son Hydar Sháh. His tomb may still be seen below the Zayna Kadal, the fourth of the thirteen bridges that span the river Jhelam in its course through the valley of Kashmir.